

# L'Amore Protetto dal Cielo,

O S I A

## LA VESTALE.

A

S E R I O U S   O P E R A,

I N   T W O   A C T S.

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W R I T T E N   B Y

CHARLES FRANCIS BADINI, L. L. D.

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A S   P E R F O R M E D   A T   T H E

KING's THEATRE in the HAY-MARKET.

T H E   M U S I C   B Y

SIGNOR VENANZIO RAUZZINI.

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"Unequal Task! a Passion to resign  
"For hearts so touch'd, so pierc'd, so lost as mine."

POPE'S ELOISA.

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L   O   N   D   O   N :

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M.DCC.LXXXVII.



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## P R E F A C E.

AMONG the fabulous Deities of ancient Rome, one of the most conspicuous was the Goddess VESTA. She had a Temple near the Capitol, and, in the month of June, the Romans celebrated in her honour a curious festival, which chiefly consisted in a race of Asles crowned with flowers. Numa Pompilius, second King of the Romans, consecrated to her an everlasting fire, and committed the care of it to young Virgins, descended from the most illustrious patrician families. From the name of the Goddess they were called VESTALS, though some Grammarians derive that appellation from *vestiendo*, or *viſtando*. But notwithstanding that their institution is generally ascribed to Numa, it is certain that, long before his reign, a number of Grecian Virgins were employed in the same office in the Temple of Pallas, at Athens.—The Persians have preserved a sacred flame from time immemorial; and it appears from Chapter vi. of *Leviticus*, that the Jews kept a perpetual fire on the altar—the latter, however, employed no Virgin to watch it, Moses having so little regard for stale virginity, that he compelled every maid, that had attained a certain age, to marry the first slave that would have her.

Besides the custody of the Holy Fire, the Nuns of Vesta were intrusted with an important secret, which it was a sacrilege to reveal. The elucidation of this secret has long puzzled the ingenuity of the learned. Some think that the everlasting fire of Vesta was an emblem of the immortality of the soul; others pretend, that it represented the

purity of love, and consider it as a philosophical intimation, that the Sovereign Good of mankind consisted in the enjoyment of a mutual and constant affection; which is supposed to have been the chief arcanum of the Eleusian mysteries. But the greatest number will have it, that the secret did not relate to the holy fire, but only to the Palladium of Rome, a statue of Pallas, which, as Cicero affirms, the Romans believed to have dropped from Heaven, and was deposited in the Temple of Vesta. They tell us, that the people of Rome, being firmly persuaded that the security and splendour of their country depended on the patronage of that idol, were afraid of divulging her name, lest their enemies should have an opportunity of imploring her assistance, and deprecating her vengeance. Which of these different opinions is best grounded, and more consonant to reason, I leave the Reader to determine.

The Vestals were admitted to take the veil at six years old, and not above the age of ten; they were bound to a solemn vow of chastity till they had passed thirty years in the order, after which they were allowed to marry. Those that had the misfortune of being convicted of an intrigue, were condemned to die, and for the greatest part buried alive. History has transmitted to us the names of seventeen Vestals who suffered the rigour of the law. These unfortunate Virgins, till Nerva came to the Empire, except in the reigns of Vespasian and his son Titus, who overlooked their faults, were treated with the utmost severity. For the least inattention in their duty, or any wantonness in their conduct, they were unmercifully flogged. Some of them being detected in writing love-verses and billet-doux, were subjected to that punishment. This was generally the fate of the youngest, and the Pontiff, or High-

Priest, performed the pious ceremony in private: a circumstance which, as some authors report, induced Julius Cæsar to solicit the Pontificate.

During the glorious days of Rome, the Vestals enjoyed a great number of privileges, and were in some measure regarded as Divinities; but their consequence declined with the prosperity of the Empire, which by some is imputed to a strange relaxation in their religious discipline. About the time of the first Emperors they assumed an air of gallantry in their looks as well as in their manners, and became such arrant coquettes, that they painted as well as some of our fine ladies, and the studied novelty of their dress used to be the pattern of fashion. The progress of Christianity hastened their destruction, and under Theodosius the Great their establishment was almost entirely abolished.— Some Fathers of the Church, and St. Ambrose in particular, have reflected with pompous declamation on the Pagan religion, concerning the barbarous sentence that attended the delinquency of the Vestals. To shut a living girl in the loathsome grave, for no other fault than the frailty of love, was indeed a species of the most atrocious cruelty: but what can we say of the inhumanity practised in our days, on those poor virgins that are buried alive without having betrayed any symptom of amorous fragility, and whose innocence is not suspected?

Many extraordinary prodigies respecting the Vestals have been reported by the gravest authors. The most curious of these tales is that of a young Vestal, who let the sacred fire go out while she was perusing a love-letter. We are told, that the moment she perceived her misfortune, she threw the guilty epistle on the altar, when on a sudden the

holy flame, being miraculously relighted, destroyed the billet-doux, and prevented the detection of her neglect.

To heighten the interest of this piece, and for the sake of variety and stage-effect, I have followed the general history of the Vestals, without adhering to historic truth in every particular. I have therefore supposed Emilia the daughter of Domitian, though this Emperor never had a daughter, and the only Vestal of the name of Emilia, that was put to death, suffered in the time of Cassius Severus. Several Vestals, however, were allied to the Emperors, as, for instance, the Vestal Junia, who was a near relation of Augustus; and Cornelia was buried alive by Domitian's order: From which it appears that my deviations from history are not inconsistent with the rules of dramatic probability.

The principal scope of this drama being to expose the follies of superstition, I have introduced an Oracle, expressed in ambiguous terms, pursuant to the usual form of oracular predictions.—To produce an Italian Opera absolutely free from incongruities, is a task that borders on impossibility; yet I hope I shall not be deemed presumptuous to think, that the present Opera has a better claim to the indulgence of an English audience than the operatical rhapsodies commonly imported from Italy.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

EMILIA, a *Vestal*, in love  
with Celer, - - } Madame MARA.

CELER, a *Roman Knight*, in  
love with Emilia, - - } Signor Giov. RUBINELLI.

DOMITIAN, *Emperor of Rome*,  
and *High-Priest*, - - } Signor MENGozzi.

LICINIUS, a *Roman Knight*, and  
*Confidant of Domitian*, } Signor BALELLI,

PINARIA MAXIMA, *Gover-*  
*ness of the young Vestals*, } Signora SCHINOTTI.

POMPONIA, a *Vestal*, in love  
with Licinius, - - } Signora SESTINI.

VENUS.

*Young Vestals, Guards, Attendants, Soldiers, and  
People.*

*The Scene lies in ROME.*

Ballet-Master,  
Monsieur Hus.

Principal Dancers,

Monsieur Gojon, Mademoiselle Morzon, Madem. Eleonore Simonet, Madem. Rosine Simonet, Monsieur L'Aborie,	Monsieur Henry, Monsieur Grecourt, Monsieur Hus, jun. and Madame Perignon.
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Painter and Machinist,  
Signor GAETANO MARINARI.

Taylor and Inventor of the Dresses,  
Signor LUCCINO.

## A T T O I.

### S C E N A I.

*Tempio di Vesta, simulacro della medesima nel mezzo. Foco sacro acceso sull'ara, innanzi alla quale si vedono le Vestali prostrate.*

*La tenda alzandosi lentamente al suono di patetica armonia, comincia il seguente.*

Coro di Vergini Vestali.

*ALMA Vesta, immortal Diva,  
Santo Nume tutelare  
Serba ognor nel nostro core  
Qual si serba su quell' are  
Puro foco, eterno ardore,  
Viva fiamma d' onestà.*

Pinaria e Pomponia,

*Pin.* Ninfe di paradiso, alme fenici,  
Che involandovi al mondo,  
Ed ai mortali inganni,  
Della virtù sui gloriosi vanni,  
Vi sollevate al Cielo,  
Ringraziate la Dea,  
Di voi, di Roma, e del Romano Impero  
Augusta Protettrice,  
Che quà chiamovvi a trar vita felice,  
Lungi dalle procelle [Tutte le Vestali sospirano.  
Del pelago amorofo,  
Ove insidie di morte  
Tendono le fallaci empie sirene,  
E in cento scoglj e cento urtar conviene.

# A C T . I.

## S C E N E I.

*Temple of Vesta, with her statue in the middle. The hallowed fire is lighted on the altar, before which the Vestals are prostate.*

*The curtain rising slowly to a plaintive tune, the following Chorus is sung by young Vestals.*

*IMMORTAL Vesta, make our tender hearts  
The constant object of thy holy care;  
Grant us that zeal which Heav'nly grace imparts,  
And tune our souls to penitence and pray'r.*

*Pinaria and Pomponia.*

*Pin.* Ye sacred Virgins, nymphs of Paradise  
Who bade the world farewell, to Heav'n aspiring  
On smiling Cherubs wings, exalt your voice  
In hymns of gratitude and pure devotion,  
To praise the mighty Pow'r, th' indulgent Goddess,  
Who call'd you here to lead a happy life,  
Far from the stormy seas of wanton passions,

[*Here all the Vestals sigh.*  
Where snares of death enticing sirens lay.]

*Love is a mischievous decoy,  
A passion full of restless care;  
Few lovers reach the bowl of joy,  
The lot of Tantalus most share.  
Cupid of happiness displays  
The fairest hopes to cheat mankind;  
His boasted bliss is but a blaze,  
That often leaves despair behind.*

[Exit.]

## S C E N E II.

*A Royal Apartment.**Celer and Licinius.*

*Cel.* Alas ! what dismal tidings dost thou bring !  
Am I then doom'd to lose the only hope  
Of my enamour'd soul, the fair Emilia,  
For whom so long I sigh'd, whose radiant charms  
Eclipse the glories of the spangled Hall—  
Emilia must I lose ? whose Heav'nly smiles  
I hop'd would charm the tempests in my mind—  
The scope, the life, the Goddess of my heart.

*Lic.* The loveliest lily that in Cupid's garden  
E'er flourish'd, now must hang her head, and perish  
By the cold breath of superstition blasted.

*Cel.* Does Vesta then presume, her gloomy veil  
May hide the sun ? Does that vain Idol mean  
To draw a curtain on the charms of Heav'n ?  
Or fill'd with envy's rancour to revile  
A Goddess far superior to herself ?

*Lic.* The sad decree so fatal to thy love  
In a celestial synod has been seal'd :  
'Tis what Domitian says—with giant-pride  
He scales Olympus, and proclaims himself  
The confident of Heav'n—and to pursue  
The wretched plan of his unbounded folly,  
The brainless gloomy Tyrant swears that Vesta  
Demanded him his daughter in a dream.

*Siamo Tantali in amore,  
Ed appieno il nostro ardore  
Non si può giammai sfogar.  
In quell' atto che consola,  
Il piacere a noi s' invola,  
E ci lascia in cor la pena:  
E' una luce che balena,  
Che suol fulmini recar.*

[Parte.]

## S C E N A II.

*Appartamento Reale.*

Celere e Licinio.

- Cel.* Qual annunzio funesto oh Dio! mi rechi!  
Dunque perder io deggio  
La sospirata Emilia!  
Quella che sempre amai,  
I cui vezzosi rai  
Tolgono il pregio alle splendenti stelle,  
Dal cui soave riso  
Del mio turbato cor l' aspre tempeste  
Aspettavan la calma,  
Nume de' miei desir, vita dell' Alma,  
*Lic.* L' inesorabil Vesta  
I bei gigli d' amore  
Che fiorivan per te, sparsi ha di gelo.  
*Cel.* Dunque di Vesta il tenebroso velo  
Nascondere presume  
Il Sol della bellezza agli occhi miei?  
*Lic.* Così voglion gli Dei,  
Almen Cesare il dice, e ognor si vanta  
Che tutti i suoi pensieri il Ciel consiglia,  
Che Vesta in sogno a lui chiese la figlia.

*Cel.* Da sì fiero cordoglio  
 E' questo cor commosso,  
 Che 'l sollievo del pianto aver non posso.  
*Ab per sempre il caro Bene*  
*Ho perduto! e non m' avanza*  
*Un sol raggio di speranza,*  
*Che mi possa lusingar.*

[Parte.]

## S C E N A III.

Licinio solo.

Nella di lui sciagura,  
 Della cara Pomponia  
 Il rio destin rammento,  
 E al par del suo crudele è 'l mio tormento.

*La sorte tiranna*  
*De' miseri amanti*  
*Mi turbā, mi affanna,*  
*Mi fa palpitar.*  
*Pietade mi viene*  
*Del tenero ardore:*  
*Compiange le pene*  
*Chi è avvezzo a penar.*

[Parte.]

## S C E N A IV.

*Tempio di Vesta: simulacro della medesima nel mezzo.*  
*Foco sacro acceso sull' ara. Trono destinato per l'Impe-*  
*ratore.*

Pinaria e Pomponia.

*Pin.* Andiamo amica andiamo  
 A ricever di Cesare la figlia,  
 Dell' aurea fenice  
 Inclita imitatrice,  
 Che con penier giocondo  
 Rinasce al Cielo allor che muore al mondo.

[Vanno alla porta del Tempio a ricever Emilia.]

*Cel.* A raging grief is pressing on my heart,  
And e'en obstructs the passage of my tears—  
To weep—the only privilege of wretches  
Is to my boundless wretchedness deny'd.

*I am, alas! condemn'd to be  
For ever divorc'd from my fair,  
All hopes of comfort fly from me,  
My heart's a prey to black despair.* [Exit,

## S C E N E III.

Licinius alone.

*Lic.* My bosom beats responsive to his sighs ;  
For to my mind his am'rous pangs recall  
The cruel fate of my belov'd Pomponia,  
And make me sympathize with all his suff'rings.

*When faithful lovers burn in vain,  
With them in misery combin'd  
My wounded heart endures their pain,  
I catch the anguish of their mind.  
To pity mov'd I mourn their fate,  
And tears apace begin to flow ;  
The wretch who feels affliction's weight  
Can well lament another's wo.* [Exit.

## S C E N E IV.

Temple of *Vesta*, with her statue in the middle. The hallowed fire is lighted on the altar. A Throne on one side for the Emperor.

Pinaria and Pomponia.

*Pin.* Pomponia, let us go to meet the daughter  
Of Cæsar—on she comes, inspir'd by Heav'n,  
Our awful cells and solitudes to grace,  
And, phænix-like, while to the world she dies,  
In the celestial spheres her life renews.

[They go to meet Emilia at the gate of the Temple.]

## S C E N E V.

*Whilst a solemn symphony is playing, enter Emilia crowned with flowers, preceded by the other Vestals; after whom come the Emperor, Licinius, and attendants. The Emperor ascends the Throne, and Emilia kneels down at his feet, betwixt Pinaria and Pomponia.*

*Dom.* What does our daughter ask? *Em.* The bliss of Heav'n.

*Dom.* The sacred veil of Vesta shall promote  
The pious wish that kindles in thy breast,  
But whence thy bold request? *Em.* My faith inspires it,  
Religion prompts my soul. *Dom.* Art thou appriz'd  
Of the restraint the Goddess lays thee under?  
Of her coercive rules? *Em.* Full well I know  
That to her will my reason must submit;  
That she compels the Virgins to abjure  
Their tender feelings and renounce all joys—  
No smiling object in this sad retreat,  
The frowns of death for ever in my sight,  
My dearest kindred in oblivion grav'd;  
A suicide of nature in my vows

[*Domitian cannot refrain his tears.*

I know I must profess. *Lic.* (The tyrant weeps.)

*Dam.* (Ye soft emotions of my heart be silent.)  
O daughter, hear me—this is the last time  
The tender name of father I assume;  
Hereafter Vesta with parental care  
Shall rule thy happy days: O let thy heart  
Make room to entertain the flowing joys  
That Heav'n prepares; the fav'rite Bride of Jove  
A mighty Goddess thou shalt be proclaim'd,  
And radiant stars shall crown thy nuptial bed.

[*Emilia sighs.*

## S C E N A V.

*All suono di allegra sinfonia entra Emilia coronata di fiori,  
preceduta dalle altre Vestali, appresso a cui vengano l'Imperatore, Licinio, e seguito. L'Imperatore sale sul Trono, a' piedi del quale Emilia s' inginocchia in mezzo a Pinaria e Pomponia.*

*Dom.* Figlia che brami? *Em.* Il Cielo.

*Dom.* Di Vesta il sacro velo

Farà pago 'l desir che 'n cor ti siede:

Dimmi, chi guida il tuo pensier? *Em.* La fede.

*Dom.* Sai ciò che Vesta impone?

*Em.* So che al di lei voler la mia ragione

Sottometter io deggio,

Abjurare i miei sensi,

A' mortali piacer chiuder le porte

Tutte nell' alma mia, che sol la morte

Di sospirar mi lice,

Che gli amici, i congiunti,

Il Genitor istesso.

Dopo il mio voto amar non mi è permesso.

*(Il reo Tiranno inumidisce il ciglio.)*

[*Domiziano non può rattener le lagrime.*]

*(Tenerezze non chiedo a voi consiglio.)*

Odimi figlia mia,

Questa è l' ultima volta

Che tal oso appellarti;

Figlia di Vesta or sei:

Serba festoso il cor, ch' oggi di Giove

Dichiarata tu se' la sposa eletta,

E un talamo di gigli in Ciel t' aspetta.

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[*Emilia sospira.*]

Ma come? tu sospiri!  
 Forse il vietato affetto  
 Ancor ti serpe in petto—  
 I voti tuoi rammenta,  
 Se colpevol farai,  
 Distinguermi nel sen tu non potrai  
 Per lusinga al tuo errore  
 Un sol vestigio di paterno amore,

*Non sperar da me clemenza,*  
*Non sperar giammai perdono:*  
*La Giustizia assisa in Trono*  
*T' assicura il mio rigor.*

*Tutti i fulmini del Cielo*  
*Sul tuo capo piomberanno:*  
*Condannata a eterno affanno*  
*Tu farai dal suo furor.*

[Parte con Licinio, e seguita]

### S C E N A VI.

Emilia, Pinaria, Pomponia, e le altre Vestali.

- Em.* L' april de' giorni miei  
 Alla Diva offerisco, e questa fiamma  
 Di conservar prometto—
- Pin.* Figlia giurar tu dei  
 Di serbar nel tuo petto il cor sicuro  
 Contro il desio d' amor, *Em.* (Oh Dio!) lo giur
- Pin.* Con religiosa cura  
 Custodisci di Vesta il sacro foco,  
 Pensa che sol dipende  
 Da quell' accesa e venerata face  
 La salvezza di Roma, e la sua pace.
- [Partono Pinaria, Pomponia, e le altre Vestali  
 eccetto Emilia.]

[ 11 ]

Ha ! dost thou sigh ? that messenger of grief  
Betrays a secret guilt, a lurking passion ;  
Thy solemn vows remember and beware ;  
Propinquity of blood I now disclaim,  
And hold thee quite a stranger to my heart :  
Subdue thy fierce desires, thy lawless flame,  
Forget thy love—for thou art sure to find  
In thy transgressions a relentless judge.

*Trust not in mercy, to my heart  
The deeds of mercy are unknown :  
True Monarchs act a lion's part,  
Swords, chains and fury guard their Throne.  
Like lightning, deaf to ev'ry pray'r,  
My wrath shall blast thy blooming age ;  
Then Heav'n to curse thee with despair  
Shall hurl the thunder of his rage.*

[Exit with Licinius and attendants.]

### S C E N E VI.

Emilia, Pinaria, Pomponia, and the other Vestals.

*Em.* The spring of life, the golden joys of youth  
I offer to the Goddess, and this flame  
I promise to maintain. *Pin.* A solemn oath  
Must bind thy soul, make all thy thoughts submissive  
To Vesta's orders, to her laws divine ;  
Swear then that frozen chastity for ever  
Shall chill the glowings of thy virgin blood.

*Em.* (Alas ! my heart !) I swear. *Pin.* A watchful eye  
Over the sacred light be sure to keep ;  
On that celestial pledge think that the peace  
And the security of Rome depend.

[*Exeunt Pinaria, Pomponia, and the other Vestals  
except Emilia.*] C 2

## SCENE VII.

Emilia and Celer.

*My passion takes a sudden spring;  
Spite of my chains my wishes rove;  
My tender thoughts on fancy's wing  
Fly to the object of my love.*

*Em.* O cruel destiny! tyrannic law!

Doom'd to forget the idol of my wishes,  
While the dear image graven in my heart  
Is the sole aim, the spring of all my thoughts:  
His looks, his sighs, e'er present to my mind,  
E'en in my pray'rs methinks to him I speak.

*Cel.* Behold the horrid tomb that holds my life!

Relentless walls! dread butchery of love!  
Alas! the only sight makes nature start,  
Congeals my blood, and bids my gushing tears  
Deplore Emilia's fate. *Em.* What do I hear!

*Cel.* Life of my life, Emilia, dearest love,  
Again I view the source of all my joys.

*Em.* Sweet Heav'n protect my soul—I faint—I die.

[Leans against the altar.

*Cel.* Banish thy fears, I come to calm thy grief.

*Em.* What boldness led thee to this sacred cloister?

How dar'st thou tread this ground with feet unhallow'd?

*Cel.* Love was my guide, the prompter of my courage;  
To steal a glance of thy celestial charms  
I'd boldly venture on the Stygian pools,  
Where sullen cares and endless tortures dwell;  
One of thy looks affords me more delight,

## SCENA VII.

Emilia, indi Celere.

*Fra le barbare catene  
Cresce l' ali al mio disio;  
Ed al caro amato Bene  
Volan tutti i miei pensier.*

Ahi destino crudel! legge tiranna!  
Eh come mai pos' io  
L' idolo del mio cor porre in obbligo!  
Se scolpito nell' alma ho il suo sembiante;  
Fin nel sonno presenti  
Mi son gli sguardi, ed i sospiri sui,  
Parmi negl' inni ancor ch' io parli a lui.

*Cel.* Ecco la tomba rea  
Che racchiude il mio Sol, l' anima mia:  
Sul limitar dell' inumano albergo  
M' opprimono i singulti, il ciglio aspergo:  
Questo è 'l carcere tetro, in cui pur vive  
Il mio pensiero, ed il mio cor sepolto:  
Ahi tormento! ahi dolor! *Em.* Numi, che ascolto!

*Cel.* Alfin pur ti riveggo  
Unico mio tesoro.

*Em.* Soccorretemi—io moro— *[Si appoggia all' arco]*

*Cel.* Non palpitar d' affanno,  
Mia speranza, mia vita.

*Em.* In questi sacri chiostri  
Come osasti stampar orme profane?

*Cel.* Amor guidò i miei passi:  
Dell' Erebo profondo  
Avrei tentato il periglioso guado  
Per rivederti o Cara,  
Che un sol de' sguardi tuoi  
Più felice mi rende

D'uomo che offeso i lumi  
 Torni a veder il Sole,  
 E dileguare in un balen si senta  
 Alle pupille il velo :  
 L'alme beate in Cielo  
 Forse provar diletto eguale al mio—  
**Em.** Non favellar così—lasciami, fuggi—  
 Gli scambievoli affetti  
 Ch'erano un di sì grati,  
 Le parole cortesi, i dolci vezzi,  
 I fociosi sospiri,  
 Gli amabili delirj,  
 Tutti tutti si spargano d'obbligo :  
 Amante, amor, cari diletti addio.

**Cel.** Come! crudel—che dici? **Em.** E' ver, tu sei  
 Il core del mio cor; eppur io deggio  
 Abbandonarti: a questo  
 Sacrifizio funesto  
 Di santa Religion mi sprona il zelo,  
 L'impone il Genitor, l'ordina il Cielo.

**Cel.** Il tuo zelo è un inganno,  
 Il Genitore un perfido, un tiranno,  
 E tutto il Cielo accolto  
 Io vagheggio ne' rai del tuo bel volto.

**Em.** Taci profano, taci,  
 Non provocar gli Dei,  
 Scorda gli affetti tuoi, ch'io scordo i miei.

**Cel.** Numi, che ascolto mai! perfide stelle!  
 Ch'io mi scordi di te!  
 Ch'io ti lasci per sempre!  
 Ah qual anima stoica  
 Sarebbe mai di sopportar capace  
 L'impeto del mio duol! ingrata—oh Dei!  
 Torre il calore al foco, i raggi al Sole

Than he who never saw the glorious Sun  
 Can taste, the moment his desiring eyes,  
 From blindness free, admire the beams of light,  
 The boundless joys, the raptures of the blest,  
 My happiness may equal, not surpass.

*Em.* Curb thy licentious tongue—ah leave me, fly me—  
 Those mutual tender feelings once so dear,  
 Those burning sighs, that kindled all my thoughts,  
 I must forget, and are a crime to me:  
 Bewitching accents and ambrosial kisses,  
 That have so oft imparadis'd my soul,  
 Sweet blandishments of love for e'er adieu.

*Cel.* Ah, cruel maid, what dost thou say? *Em.* The flame,  
 I own, is but repress'd, and not extinguished;  
 My lab'ring mind, my soul, still springs to thee:  
 Yet my religious zeal abjures the thought.  
 My father bade me share the Vestal's lot,  
 And Heav'n uniting in his stern command  
 Ordains the sacrifice of all my joys.

*Cel.* Thy zeal betrays a superstitious folly,  
 Thy savage Parent is a bloody tyrant,  
 And as to Heav'n, it centers in thy looks.

*Em.* Hold, hold thy lips profane, resign thy passion  
 Thy love forget, and I'll forget my own.

*Cel.* Is it Emilia speaks? Perfidious stars!  
 To think of thee no more? forget Emilia!  
 Ah! where's the stoic soul can bear the daggers  
 Thou now hast spoke?—To funder heat and fire,  
 To sheer the beaming glories of the Sun

Would be an easier task than quench my flame,  
Than blot thy lovely image from my heart.

*Ungrateful maid, thou hop'st in vain*

*My settled purpose to remove;*

*All thy rebukes can't make me stain*

*My faithful soul with perjur'd love.*

*My passion even with my breath*

*I am unable to resign;*

*The chilling damps of frozen death*

*Can never quench a flame like mine.*

*Beyond the fatal Stygian shore*

*Too late, alas! thou shalt relent,*

*My slighted tenderness deplore,*

*Thy matchless cruelty repent.*

[Exit.]

### S C E N E VIII.

Emilia alone.

Ah me! what have I said! what senseless rage

Has made my lips the tyrants of my heart!

Cesar! my life, my comfort, and my all—

My love restrain'd springs with elastic force

At Cupid's call, and I'm compell'd to yield. [Exit.]

[As soon as Emilia is gone, the sacred fire yields a large blaze, and suddenly becomes extinct.

### S C E N E IX.

Pinaria and Pomponia.

*Pin.* The sacred flame expir'd. *Pom.* Ah, where's Emilia?

*Pin.* The guilty maid is gone—the profanation,

The dire event to Cesar I'll make known. [Exit.]

*Pom.* Alas! I shudder at Emilia's peril;

Her frailty pleads compassion in my heart;

While fancy glows with a mistaken zeal,

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Più facile faria,  
Ch' estinguere l' ardor dell' Alma mia.

*Barbara in van lo speri,*  
*Perfida indarno il brami,*  
*Che questo cor non t' ami,*  
*Ch' io più non pensi a te.*

*Oltre l' estremo obblio*  
*T' adorerà 'l cor mio:*

*Allor vedrai crudelé*  
*Quanto ti fui fedele,*  
*Quanto mancasti ingrata*  
*Alla giurata fè.*

[Parte.]

### S C E N A VIII.

Emilia sola.

Misera che mai diffi !  
In quai barbari accenti  
Forsennata proruppi !  
Celere—amico—oh Dio !  
Resistere non posso all' idol mio.

[Parte.]

[Appena partita Emilia, il foco sacro lancia una  
gran fiamma, poi subito si estingue.

### S C E N A IX.

Pinaria e Pomponia.

Pin. Spenta è la sacra fiamma !  
Pom. Emilia dove sei ?  
Pin. Fuggita è la profana :  
A ragguagliar di sì funesto evento  
Cesare io volo.

[Parte.]

Pom. Intenerir mi sento  
Per la misera Emilia.  
Sinchè 'l fervor accende  
Il deluso pensiero,

Finchè natura tace,  
 Un asilo di pace  
 Questo carcere sembra :  
 Ma basta che baleni  
 Un lampo di ragion nell' alma nostra  
 Per ravvisar l' inganno,  
 Perchè si colmi 'l sen d' immenso affanno.

*Finchè vede il Ciel sereno,*  
*Finchè non contrasta il vento,*  
*Non condanna il suo cimento*  
*Chi le vele osò spiegar.*  
*Ma se 'l turbine si destà,*  
*Si smarrisce, si confonde,*  
*Si fa dubbio più dell' onde,*  
*E si turba più del mar.*

[Parte.

## S C E N A X.

Celere ed Emilia.

*Emilia si avanza, e si avvede che la fiamma dell' ara è estinta.*

*Em.* Non arde il lume, o stelle ! ahi sventurata !

*Cel.* Cara non paventar ; fuggiamo amica,  
 Andiamo a respirar aure più liete  
 Sotto Ciel più sereno

Ove non sia delitto,  
 Se d' adorar avviene a un cor amante  
 Le bell' opre del Cielo in un sembiante.

*Em.* Ogni momento io sento nel cor mio  
 Infiammarsi 'l desio,  
 Ma mi arresta il timor ; la mano ultrice  
 Dell' oltraggiata Diva  
 Sembrami già veder di sdegno armata  
 Per punire quest' alma innamorata.

And superstition drowns the voice of nature,  
 This holy dungeon seems a seat of peace,  
 But when a flash of reason strikes the mind,  
 Before her fulgid rays th' illusion flies,  
 Then keen desires in ceaseless tumult rising  
 Scorn the restraint, and, forc'd to bite her chains,  
 The soul gives loose to horror and despair.

*The vent'rous plougher of the main,*  
*While it displays a placid scene,*  
*While Æolus hides his blust'ring train,*  
*Fearless enjoys a mind serene.*  
*But when the roaring thunders roll,*  
*And surges foam, transform'd to graves,*  
*The tempest creeps into his soul,*  
*He grows more wavering than the waves.*

## S C E N E X.

Celer and Emilia.

*Emilia coming near the altar perceives that the sacred fire  
 is extinct.*

*Em.* The flame is out—ye Pow'rs! a crowd of terrors  
 Rise to my view. *Cel.* My love compose thyself,  
 And hasten to desert these gloomy walls;  
 Let us repair to more indulgent skies  
 Untainted with the breath of tyranny,  
 Where 'tis no sin to love, where, without crime,  
 An altar may be rais'd to charms like thine,  
 Which speak the wonders of eternal Jove.

*Em.* Alas! thy accents are the darts of Cupid,  
 And urge to ruin my desiring soul—  
 A deadly fear anticipates remorse  
 And o'er my guilty head methinks I see  
 Celestial vengeance nod, the thunder fall.

*Cel.* Thy sad alarms are dreams and airy phantoms ;  
 By vulgar folly bred, and nurs'd by fraud :  
 Follow the path kind nature points to thee,  
 Make her thy bosom-council, be assur'd  
 The voice of nature speaks the will of Heav'n,

*Em.* Well, to thy wishes I resign myself ;  
 Nature has made me frail t' enforce her summons,  
 Which hearts of gentle mould must e'er obey.

*I am a Vestal fir'd with love,*  
*And while I try to quench my flame,*  
*Provoking Demons disapprove*  
*The sting of guilt, the sense of shame,*  
*My burning wishes to restrain*  
*I ought, but cannot what I ought ;*  
*My passion glows in ev'ry vein,*  
*I h'ave the sin, and grieve the fault.* [Exeunt.

## S C E N E XI.

Domitian and Attendants with lighted torches, then Pinaria  
 and Emilia under a guard of Lictors.

*Dom.* The sacred flame's extinct—Superior Beings !

What dread calamity shall now await us !

What wretched doom shall fall on our poor country !

*Pin.* Emilia is secur'd, the unfortunate virgin

The Lictors intercepted in her flight,

And here, behold, they bring her. *Dom.* Impious  
 wretch ! [Enter Emilia with Lictors.

What fury could provoke, what Demon urge  
 Thy soul to perpetrate the horrid deed ?

*Em.* Th' atrocious crime with which I stand arraigned  
 Is love, which I can't hide, and I plead guilty—  
 For ten revolving funs a tender mortal  
 Reign'd in my heart—this awful solitude

- Cel.* Non paventar mia vita :  
 Batti 'l sentier che la natura addita,  
 Configliati con lei,  
 Ciò che Natura vuol, voglion gli Dei.
- Em.* Eccomi a' tuoi voleri,  
 Ch' io non ho cor bastante  
 A contrastar l' acuto  
 Irrepugnabil sprone,  
 Che in ogni alma gentil Natura pone.
- Son Vestale e sono amante,*  
*E l' affetto in sen costante*  
*Al mio Ben ferbar io vo',*  
*Mi tormenta il fallo mio,*  
*Ma del tenero desio*  
*Frenar gl' impeti non so,*

[Partono.]

## S C E N A XI.

Domitiano e seguito con fiaccole accese, indi Pinaria ed  
 Emilia accompagnata da Littori.

- Dom.* Estinto è il sacro foco : eccelsi Numi !  
 Che mai farà di noi ? Roma è tradita.
- Pin.* Non indarno inseguita  
 Fu l' infelice Emilia : [Entra Emilia co' Littori.  
 Eccola da' Littori accompagnata.
- Dom.* Ah ! figlia sventurata !  
 Qual insano furore  
 Ti oscurò la ragion ? *Em.* Il grave errore,  
 Il mio atroce delitto,  
 Oppur l' affetto mio  
 Nascondere non posso, e no'l desio,  
 Un tenero mortal che fu due lustri  
 L' idolo del mio cor, ardito il piede  
 Osò portar in questo sacro chiostro ;

L' antica fiamma in un balen fu desta,  
E spegnere lasciai quella di Vesta.

*Dom.* Perfida non giurasti  
Al cospetto di Vesta, innanzi all' ara  
Di cancellar dal seno  
Tutte le tracce dell' antico ardore.

*Em.* Giurava il labbro, e lo negava il core.

*Dom.* Come già fu Cornelia,  
Perfida tu farai viva sepolta.

## S C E N A XII,

Celere e detti.

*Cel.* Ferma, Signor, la sua difesa ascolta.

*Dom.* Qual folle ardir ! *Pin.* (Che miro !)

*Cel.* Emilia non è rea.

*Dom.* Come ! i sacri precetti della Dea  
Non trasgredì ? non ha tradito i voti ?

*Cel.* Quando son così strani,  
Non ascoltano i Numi i voti umani.

*Dom.* Perfido non paventi

I fulmini del Ciel ? *Cel.* S' è ver che fia

L' Olimpo ognor sereno,

Non ha fulmini il Cielo,

L' empio furor solo in Averno regna,

Giove mai non si sdegna —

*Pin.* Inorridir mi fa !

[*Pinaria parte.*

*Cel.* Dolce mia vita,

*Dom.* Frena gli accenti indegno  
Audace ingannator.

He boldly enter'd, then his tempting accents,  
 His burning sighs reviv'd my lurking flame,  
 And blew out that of Vesta. *Dom.* Horrid! horrid!  
 Did not a solemn oath bind thy affections?  
 Before the mighty Goddess hast not thou  
 Profess'd eternal chastity? *Em.* I have,  
 But while my lips gave utt'rance to the vow,  
 My heart forswore it. *Dom.* Then Cornelia's lot  
 Be thine—the gates of mercy are all shut.  
 Tho' yet alive thou shalt be dead, thy soul  
 Condemn'd to feel the horrors of the grave,  
 And there to breathe her last in full despair.

## S C E N E XII.

*To them Celer.*

*Cel.* Forbear, O Cæsar, stay, hear her defence.  
*Dom.* Who dares oppose my will? *Pin.* (What do I see?)  
*Cel.* Emilia's innocent. *Dom.* How! did she not  
 Transgred the precepts of ethereal Vesta?  
 Did she not violate her vows? *Cel.* The Gods,  
 Ne'er lend their gracions ear to vows like hers!  
 When vows are so insane, Jove bids us break 'em,  
 And perjury becomes a splendid virtue.  
*Dom.* O sacrilegious wretch! dost thou not dread  
 The Thund'rer's rage? *Cel.* Olympus, the bright  
 mansion  
 Of the celestial pow'rs shines e'er unclouded,  
 And therefore thunder-bolts can't be form'd there;  
 Nor can we think the breast of Jupiter,  
 Where mercy sits enthron'd in boundless glory,  
 Susceptible of ire and mean revenge.

*Pin.* His impious words congeal my blood. [ *Pin. exit.* ]

*Cel.* Emilia,

Soul of my soul. *Dom.* Hold, vile seducer, hold,  
 Thou Monster skill'd in blasphemous deceipt;

*Em.* No, father, Celer is sincere, his lips,  
Are but the organ of his heart. *Cel.* Yes, Cæsar,  
Emilia's cause is mine, and to defend her  
My lips unveil'd the oracles of truth,  
But her pure accents wound the tyrant's ears,  
And hence are styl'd by them deceits. *Dom.* Confusion!  
(Can Cæsar bear such outrage:) Thoughtless wretch!  
Hast thou forgot that Vestals are forbid  
The solaces of love. *Cel.* When thy command  
Shall stop a fev'rish heat, prevent the blossoms  
Which genial warmth awakens in the spring,  
Forbid the flow'r's perfume, the growth of plants,  
Emilia's passion shall obey thy laws.

*Dom.* Here, guards, disarm the traitor— *Cel.* Cruel stars!  
*Em.* Ah, dearest husband, come to my fond arms,  
And take the last farewell. *Dom.* Audacious slaves!  
Soldiers disjoin their criminal embraces.

[*Celer and Emilia embracing each other are separated by the guards.*

*Cel.* Forbear, inhuman tyrants: a few instants  
We only ask to grieve our misery.

*Cel.* If with my blood from threat'ning death  
My darling object I can free,  
Contented I resign my breath,  
Sorrows are happiness to me.

*Em.* If with my tortures I can save  
My love, and give his pangs relief,  
I look with rapture on the grave,  
I feel a comfort in my grief.

*Em.* Ah caro padre.

Celere non m' inganna,  
E' sincero 'l suo cor. *Cel.* Il labbro mio,  
Per mia, per sua difesa,  
L' oracolo del vero a te palesa,  
Ma so che reo costume è de' Tiranni  
I puri accenti suoi chiamar inganni.

*Dom.* (Tanta baldanza io soffro!)

Non ti rammenti infano—  
Stolta non ti sovviene che alle Vestali  
E' vietato l' amor. *Cel.* Vedi se puoi  
Vietar l' ardor febbriale ad un infermo,  
Proibisci all' Aprile i suoi germogli,  
Vieta l' odore ai fiori,  
Il crescere alle piante,  
E allor le vieterai d' esser amante.

*Dom.* Si disarmi l' indegno— *Cel.* Iniqua sorte!

*Em.* Caro mio sposo—amante—amico—oh Dio!

Prendi l' ultimo addio.

*Dom.* Dividete custodi

Quelli amplexi profani.

[*Si abbracciano, e vengono separati dalle guardie.*

*Cel.* Fermatevi inumani,

Lasciate almen tiranni

Qualche istante di pace ai nostri affanni.

*Cel.* Se col mio sangue io posso  
Salvar l' oggetto amato,  
Vado a morir beato,  
M' è grato ogni martir.

*Em.* Se coll' affanno mio  
Si salva il caro bene,  
Son dolci le mie pene,  
Contenta io vò a morir.

- Dom. *Faci spèrgiura, indegna—*  
 Cel. { 2. *Padre, Signor, perdonò.*  
 Em. { 2. *Senii di { lei { lui pietà.*  
 Dom. *Più Genitor non sono.*  
 Cel. { 2. *Chi vide mai di questa*  
 Em. { 2. *Più acerba crudeltà!*  
 Dom. *Lungi da me profani,*  
 Cel. { 2. *Chi vide mai di questa*  
 Em. { 2. *Più acerba crudeltà!*  
 Dom. *Ogni più fier cordoglio,*  
*Fiamme, catene e morte,*  
*Tutte le furie io voglio*  
*Ministre al mio furor.*  
 Cel. Em. *L' orride tigri ircane*  
*Sono di te più umane;*  
*Ahi disperata sorte!*  
*Momento di terror!*

FINE DELL' ATTO PRIMO.

*Dom. Peace, perjur'd woman, lost to shame.*

**Cel. Em.** Father forgive our tender love.

Dom. *Avaunt, I scorn a parent's name.*

Cel. Em. *Ah, let our griefs thy pity move!*

*Dom.* In vain you sue—you plead in vain,

*My boundless ire, I can't refrain.*

Cel. Em. *Ab leave us not, O father stay.*

Dom. Hold off, ye souls profane away.

**Cel. Em.** Such cruelty was never seen:

*No rage can match this tyrant's*

*Dom. No thought of mercy can assuage*

*The fiends that in my bosom dwell;*

*I'll conjure up, to glut my rage,*

### *All the dread ministers of hell.*

Cel. Em., *Less fierce Hyreanian tygers are,*

*And far more human than thou art:*

*O dreadful moment of despair!*

*O restless anguish of my heart!*

...and to decide by

**END OF THE FIRST ACT.**

## A C T    II.

## S C E N E I.

*The Senate Hall.*Pinaria, Pomponia, and the other *Vestals.*

*Pin.* VIRGINS be warn'd against the wanton aim,  
 The rash attempt of your deluded sister,  
 Lest she should spread contagion in your souls.

*Pom.* (Fear strikes my mind, and all the fiends of terror  
 Are knocking at my breast.) *Pin.* Already Cæsar  
 Has call'd a general meeting of the Senate  
 Against the common danger to provide,  
 And soon the fatal sentence shall be pass'd,  
 That will with horror seize the frail Apostle,  
 And the curs'd object of her guilty flame.  
 O sacred maids remember that you are  
 The brides of Heav'n, that the celestial pow'rs  
 Have an exclusive claim to your affections.

Tyrant concupisence I know  
 To soil your purity will start,  
 And love to virtue sworn a foe  
 Rouse fiery struggles in your heart,  
 But let religion bear the fway,  
 The wanton conflict soon must cease,  
 All whisp'ring Demons fly away,  
 Your soul regain her wonted peace.    [Exeunt.

## A T T O II.

## S C E N A I.

*Atrio del Senato.*

Pinaria, Pomponia, e le altre Vestali.

- Pin.* Non vi seduca amiche  
Della speriura e misera compagnia  
Lo sconsigliato ardire.
- Pom.* (Le larve del terror tutte congiunte  
Sono ne' pensier miei.)
- Pin.* Già Cesare il Senato  
Nel comune periglio,  
Nell' evento fatal chiamò a consiglio.  
Contro la rea Vestale,  
Ed il profano oggetto  
Del suo malnato affetto  
La funesta condanna  
Vicino è a fulminar — figlie tremate:  
Spose del Ciel voi siete,  
E solamente il Cielo amar dovete.

*So che 'l desir tiranno**Alla virtù nemico**Sparge il pensier d'affanno,**Muove battaglia al cor.**Ma se si lascia intero**Alla ragion l'impero,**Non può durar l'inganno,**Cessa il contrasto allor.*

## SCENA II.

*Senato Romano.**Marcia.*

*Senatori, nel mezzo de' quali siede Domiziano, con Licinio a destra. Soldati e popolo, e Celere accompagnato da Littori.*

- Dom.* Quiriti da che Giove  
Mi collocò su questo trono augusto  
Impiegai le mie cure ad esser giusto,  
Ma non è giusto chi non è severo;  
La base d'ogni impero  
Scuoter suol la clemenza;  
Perchè Tito fu mite,  
Voi sapete le barbare sciagure,  
Che al Romano splendor fecero ecclissi,
- Pin.* Le reprobe vestali  
Tralasciò di punir. *Dam.* Così fatali  
E gravi errori io trascurar non voglio.
- Cel.* Dunque un barbaro cor — *Dom.* Quel folle or-  
goglio  
Saprò frenare indegno:  
Vittima del mio sfegno  
Tu fra poco farai. *Cel.* Le tue minacce —  
*Dom.* Faci.
- Lic.* Signor perdona, troppo  
Lascj il freno al rigor. *Dom.* Vuoi d'elle leggi  
Ch' io l' ordine sovverta?
- Lic.* Debbe alterar le leggi allor che fanno  
Alla ragione o alla pietade oltraggio  
Il Monarca che vuole oprar da saggio.

## SCENE II.

*The Roman Senate.**A March.*

*Senators, in the middle of whom sits Domitian, with Lici-nius on his right hand. Soldiers and people, Pinaria, and Celer under a guard of Lictors.*

*Dom.* Since Jove, O Romans, plac'd me on the throne,  
 The love of justice has engaged my cares;  
 But he can't be deem'd just who's not severe.  
 Empires have often ruin'd through indulgence;  
 Ye know that Titus with his boundless mercy  
 Drew on the state a series of calamities,  
 Which have eclips'd the splendour of our country.

*Pin.* The guilty Vestals Titus left unpunish'd.

*Dom.* Such fatal crimes I never shall neglect.

*Cel.* A barbarous heart then— *Dom.* Dost thou still pro-voke me?

Audacious villain—but the victim soon  
 Thou shalt become of my imperial fury.

*Cel.* Thy threat'nings Cæsar— *Dom.* Peace. *Lic.* Excuse  
 me, Sire,

Thy rigour is extreme, and tho' in justice  
 Founded, reflect that all extremes are wrong.

*Dom.* Dost thou advise me to subvert the laws?

*Lic.* Monarchs that wish to gain the fame of wisdom,  
 Either annul or mend oppressive laws,  
 Tho' set above them, and in all their mandates  
 Humanity, and reason they consult.

*Thou can'st not rule the state of Rome  
Without Minerva's gloribus aid ;  
Or thy imperial laurel's doom  
Will be to wither on thy head.  
Like that unskill'd presumptuous boy  
Who the bright coursers fain would guide,  
The world again thou shalt destroy,  
And fall a victim of thy pride.*

[Exit.]

## S C E N E III.

Domitian, Pinaria, Celer, and Emilia, &c.

*Dom.* What daring speech ! no longer will I bear  
The freedom of his tongue. *Cel.* ('Truth is a dagger  
To his felonious heart.) *Dom.* Emilia hear—

*Pin.* I tremble for her sake. *Cel.* ('The heat of life  
I feel quite freezing up at th' horrid sight  
Of such unfeeling merciless a father  
Lost to all sense of pity.) *Dom.* Th' heav'ly pow'rs,  
Looking with jealous eye on those affections  
Which thy base heart has nurs'd for a vile mortal,  
Have in revenge blown out the sacred flame.

*Cel.* The pow'rs were much unwise—If they were jealous  
They ought to have blown out the flame that rag'd  
Within her heart, and not the altar's fire.

*Dom.* Peace, thou perfidious slave ; learn to be silent.

*Em.* Behold thy daughter prostrate at thy feet—

*Dom.* In vain thou hop'st to move me to compassion,  
I am no more a father, but a Judge—  
The holy flame, the sacred pledge of Rome,  
Thou hast neglected, and betray'd the Goddes.  
Thy guilty soul is pictur'd in thy looks,  
Thy crime's undoubted ; yet I give thee leave  
To exculpate thyself, to plead thy cause.

*Se tu non sai di Roma  
 Regger col senno il freno,  
 Vedrai sulla tua chioma  
 L' alloro vacillar.  
 Avrai lo stesso scorno  
 Di quel garzon audace,  
 Che mal guidando il giorno  
 Giacque sepolto in Mar.*

[Parte.]

## S C E N A III.

Domiziano, Pinaria, Celere, ed Emilia.

- Dom.* Con che audacia costui  
 Suol favellar! *Cel.* (La verità a' Tiranni  
 Infellonisce il cor.) *Dom.* Emilia ascolta—  
*Pin.* Mi trema il cor per lei. *Cel.* (Gelo d' orrore,  
 Nel veder sì spietato il Genitore.)  
*Dom.* Dell' affetto che in seno  
 Per un mortal tu chiudi  
 Gelosi i Numi, in segno di vendetta  
 Spenser la sacra fiamma.  
*Cel.* Se del suo ardore i Numi  
 Nudrivan gelosia,  
 Spegner facea lor d' uopo  
 La fiamma del suo petto, e non dell' ara.  
*Dom.* Una volta a tacer perfido impara.  
*Em.* L' infelice tua figlia a' piedi tuoi—  
*Dom.* Tu cerchi in questo seno  
 Le tenerezze in vano,  
 Non son più Genitor; giudice sono—  
 Tu trascurasti il foco,  
 Tu tradisti la Dea,  
 Ed in fronte io ti leggo un' alma rea:  
 Scolpati pur se puoi,  
 Disenditi se sai.

*Em.* In mia difesa, Sire,  
 Altro addur io non so che della legge  
 La barbara nequizia,  
 La mia fragilità, la tua clemenza.

*Dom.* La feminil licenza  
 Refa è così frequente  
 Ch' empio fallo faria l'esser clemente.  
 Ma qual furor ti muove  
 A biasimar la venerata legge  
 Dettataci dai Numi?

*Em.* Ah! quelle dure leggi,  
 Ch' argine sono al feminil piacere,  
 Non sarian sì severe,  
 Nè sarebbe per noi  
 La libertà d' amor sì gran delitto,  
 Se l'uomo usurpator del nostro diritto  
 Non dettava il divieto. Odi qual sia  
 Del tuo sesso, Signor, la tirannia:  
 Di debole e leggiero  
 Il disprègevol titolo ci donà,  
 Le debolezze poi non ci perdona:  
 Libero sfogo a tutti i vostrí ardori  
 E' conceduto, o tollerato almeno,  
 E noi sole dobbiam con l'alme imbelli  
 Frenare i sensi alla ragion rubelli.

*Senza i dolci interni affetti*  
*Non si può viver felice:*  
*Ab se amar a noi non lice,*  
*Che ci giova il respirar?*  
*Tenerezze del cor mio,*  
*S' io vi perdo, il sommo bene*  
*Con voi perdo, e le mie pene*  
*Fan la morte a me bramar.*

[Parte con Pinaria.]

*Em.* In my defence, O Sire, I only urge  
 The barb'rous tenor of the law I broke  
 My frailty, and thy mercy. *Dom.* Such excessive  
 Licentiousness has spread among the Vestals,  
 That clemency would be the worst of crimes;  
 But what strange folly leads thee on to censure  
 The venerable law the Gods prescrib'd;

*Em.* Those laws that prove a barrier to our wishes,  
 Would not be so severe, nor liberty  
 In love be deem'd for us so great a fault,  
 If man, usurper of the female rights,  
 Had not assum'd th' authority to frame them,  
 Observe th' injustice of thy tyrant sex!  
 Thoughtless and weak you style us with contempt,  
 And then refuse our weaknes to forgive.  
 To all your wanton passions a full scope  
 You are allow'd, your errors overlook'd,  
 And only poor frail woman is compell'd  
 To stem the efforts of all-conquering nature.

*If with th' emotions of the heart  
 The mind's condemn'd to be at strife;*

*If with our feelings we must part,  
 What can avail the breath of life?*

*In love I fix'd my only scope,  
 Nor care to perish if I miss;  
 When there's no happiness to hope,  
 The sting of death becomes a bliss.*

## S C E N E IV.

*Domitian and Celer, then Licinius.*

*Dom.* The oracle, O Romans, I consulted  
On th' ominous event so often fatal.

No MERCY was the answer, which imports  
The punishment and death of both the culprits,  
*Cel.* Remember Cæsar that the Delphian words  
Have prov'd too often pregnant with delusion.

*Dom. (rising.)* Dost thou presume t' oppose the Gods com-  
mand?

The will of Heav'n? *Cel.* It is unknown to thee,

*Dom.* And is it thus thou dar'st insult the friend  
The confident of Heav'n, nay Jove himself?

*Cel.* Th' amazing height of thy insanity  
Makes thee an object of deserv'd compassion.  
Think on the distance that may be conceiv'd  
Betwixt a nothing and the infinite.  
The mind of Jove is th' infinite, and Cæsar  
Is but a cypher in the wide creation.

*Dom.* Guards seize the villain—be his lot to suffer  
The most infernal tortures e'er invented  
By the united rage of all the Tyrants,

[Enter Lictors, and take Celer away.]

*Lic.* Cæsar do not disdain my suppliant words :  
Forgive Emilia's fault, and pardon Celer ;  
The brightest jewel, and the noblest virtue  
The rulers of the world can boast, is mercy.

*Dom.* Perish the thought! let on Domitian's foes  
For e'er the thunder of his vengeance fall.  
Guilt is the offspring of this boasted mercy ;  
The source of crimes—when culprits are forgiven,  
Fair innocence is punish'd, vice protected,  
Virtue betray'd, offended justice bleeds.

## S C E N A IV.

Domižiano e Celere, *indi* Licinio,

*Dom.* L' Oracolo Quiriti

Io consultai sopra il fatal evento :  
MORANO egli rispose ; onde si vede  
Che 'l supplizio d' entrambi il Ciel richiede.

*Cel.* Sovvengati, Signore, che l' inganno  
Covar più volte suole  
Sotto il vel delle Delfiche parole.

*Dom.* I voleri del Cielo  
Di contraddir pretendi.

[ *Si alza.* ]

*Cel.* I voleri del Ciel tu non comprendi,

*Dom.* Così favelli audace

De' Numi al confidente  
All' amico di Giove, a Giove istesso ?

*Cel.* A qual malyagio eccesso  
Può l' infania condur ! pensa qual possa  
Essere la distanza  
Tra l' infinito e 'l nulla :  
Tu sei Cesare il nulla, e l' infinito  
E' la mente di Giove — *Dom.* Olà miei fidi,  
Al supplizio costui tosto si guidi.

[ *Entrano Littori che conducono via Celere.* ..

*Lic.* I miei supplici accentti  
Cesare non sdegnar — perdona a Emilia,  
A Celere perdona :  
Maggior virtù non vantano i Regnanti  
Del perdonar. *Dom.* Che dici ? La clemenza  
E' Madre della colpa ;  
Quando s' assolve il reo  
L' innocenza è punita,  
Protetto il vizio, e la virtù tradita.

*Per calmar la mia tempesta  
 La pietà sorride invano :  
 Tenerezze in me non desta,  
 Non s' arresta il mio furor.  
 Quest' acciar ch' io serbo a lato  
 Sanguinoso aver lo bramo :  
 Sia 'l mio nome ovunque odiato,  
 Ma sia oggetto di terror.*

[Parte con Licinio, &c.

### S C E N A V.

*Strada.*

*Celere ed Emilia incatenati, ed accompagnati da Littori.*

- Cel.* Alla malvagia forte  
 E' pur forza ch' io ceda: ecco alla morte  
 Io volgo il piè— *Em.* Misera Emilia! oh Dio!  
*Cel.* La morte a me gradita  
 E' in quest' istante assai più della vita;  
 Cesseranno co' tuoi gli affanni miei.  
*Em.* A che mai mi serbaste eterni Del! [Piangendo.  
*Cel.* Tu piangi il mio destinò!  
 Deh serena i bei lumi;  
 I Tiranni del Mondo  
 Ponno darci la morte;  
 Ma in lor poter non è di render l' alme  
 Sventurate per sempre:  
 Lascia pur che disciolte  
 Sien le dure catene  
 Che trattengon lo spirto nelle pene  
 Di questa frale e lagrimosa vita:  
 La reciproca fiamma  
 Che i nostri cori accende  
 Splendida apparirà ne' Regni Elii,

*No pray'rs my fury can appease,  
No tears, no groans my rage controul ;  
Compassion is a rank disease,  
Which never shall affect my soul.  
This sword, my minister of state,  
With blood I'm happy to besmear,  
Let men condemn me, let slaves hate,  
And curse my name, but let all fear.*

[Exit with Licinius, &c.

### S C E N E V.

*A Street.*

*Celer and Emilia in chains, and under a guard of Lictors.*

*Cel.* My doom's to perish—be it so—with dauntless  
Spirit of resolution I can face  
The frowns of fortune, and th' untimely grave.

*Em.* O my distracted heart ! *Cel.* Tender Emilia  
Death is a blessing to unhappy lovers ;  
And death and life are words by vulgar minds  
Mistaken—for life is death, and death is life ;  
We but begin to live when we are dead.

*Em.* Merciless Gods ; why have you summon'd me  
Into this vale of mortal misery ?  
Was it to wreak your spleen on a frail woman ? [weeping.]

*Cel.* Ah do not moan my destiny, uncloud  
Thy beauteous eyes—The Tyrants of the world  
May strike their vulture talons through our hearts,  
And rend our vital threads—but what's their pow'r ?  
It ne'er can reach the mind, nor sting the soul  
For e'er—but only break her galling fetters.  
The mutual flame that burns within our bosoms  
Shall blaze with endless brightness in Elysium,

Where Beauty never fades, where her sweet robes  
 Enchant the senses with perennial bloom;  
 There we shall taste ambrosial happiness  
 Join'd in a chorus of eternal lovers,  
 Whose ineffable joys, whose heav'nly transports  
 Shall e'er improve, and last as long as Jove.

*Delicious partner of my heart  
 Refrain thy tears, thy cares dismiss;  
 Our present sorrows will impart  
 To our fixt love an endless bliss.*

*Ere to this earthly vale we came,  
 My soul in Heav'n was link'd with thine,  
 And when we quit the mortal frame  
 We shall again for ever join.*

[Exit with two Lictors.]

*Em.* A mutual tender flame inspir'd by nature,  
 A virtuous love is curs'd by barbarous laws,  
 And the reward of innocence is death.  
 Tell me ye Deities where is your justice?  
 Your vaunted goodness, if your thunderbolts  
 Crush but the innocent, and spare the tyrants. [Exit.]

### S C E N E VIII.

*The field called Infamous, where are seen the monuments of  
 the Vestals that were buried alive, and the grave intended  
 for Emilia, with her little bed. Soldiers and people. A  
 solemn march. Pinaria lights a lamp in the grave, and  
 Pomponia places in it the usual portion of bread, oil, and  
 milk.—Domitian and Licinius with guards, then  
 Emilia, lastly Celer.*

*Dom.* Where is the guilty Vestal? *Pin.* She advances.

*Em.* (O dreadful prospect! now my tortur'd heart  
 Wants fortitude indeed—)

Ove caduchi i fiori  
 Della Beltà non sono,  
 Risplenderà fra quelle  
 D' eterni amanti avventurate schiere,  
 Ove languido mai non è il piacere.

*Dolce parte del cor mio  
 Tergi, oh Dio! l' amato ciglio,  
 L' alme nostre il mio periglio  
 Più beate renderà.*

*Quell' affetto che ho nel seno  
 Era teco unito in Cielo,  
 E spogliato il mortal velo,  
 Alle stelle tornerà.* [Parte con due Littori.]

*Em.* Un reciproco affetto  
 Ispirato dal Ciel, dalla natura  
 Si punisce di morte—  
 Ah dite o Numi dove  
 Sono i fulmini vostrì?  
 Non sembra ver che siate  
 Della giustizia e del dovere amici,  
 Se gl' innocenti sol sono infelici.

[Parte.]

## S C E N A VI.

*Campo scelerato ove si vedono le tombe delle Vestali che furono sepolte vive, e la fossa destinata ad Emilia col piccolo letto. Soldati e popolo. Marcia lugubre. Pinaria accende una lampade nella fossa, e Pomponia vi ripone la solita porzione di pene, olio e latte.*

Domiziano e Licinio con guardie, indi Emilia, finalmente Celere.

Dom. Dov' è Emilia? Pin. Signor, ecco, si avanza.

Em. (Che spettacolo ohimè! cor mio costanza.)

*Dom.* Questa, Emilia, è la tomba  
Che in un profondo obbligo  
Seppellirà l' errore  
Di quel malnato affetto,  
Onde tanto colpevole tu sei.

*Em.* Che crudeltà ! L' Autor de' giorni miei  
Di ferro e d' adamante il cor cerchiato  
Mira con ciglio asciutto,  
E con fronte serena  
Delle sciagure mie l' orribil scena.

*Dom.* Non più : si vesta del lugubre velo,  
E al castigo si affretti.

*Pin.* Afflitti Pomponia,

[*Pinaria e Pomponia levano il velo bianco ad  
Emilia, e le mettono in capo il velo nero.*

*Em.* (O momento d' orrore !)

*Pom.* (S' affollano i rimorsi intorno al core.)

*Dom.* Licinio, io pur t' imposi  
Che a queste tombe Celere scorgessi  
Onusto di catene,  
Dolente spettator. *Lic.* Signor ei viene,

### S C E N A VII.

*Celere incatenato, con guardie, e detti,*

*Cel.* Ahi vista ! ahi crudeltade !  
Genitor disumano !  
To produsser l' Eumenidi spietate,  
E del mastin trifauce  
Il rabbioso veleno  
T' allattò, ti nudrì. *Dom.* Fidi custodi,  
Immolata la rea,  
L' empio fellone indegno  
A' più crudi tormenti io lo consegno.

[*Parte con Licinio e seguito.*

*Dom.* Behold, Emilia,

Thy grave—look there—that awful tomb shall bury  
Thy shame, thy crime, and all th' alarms of Rome.

*Em.* O cruelty! the author of my days

Hunts me to grief, to misery and death;  
With tearless eyes he looks on my destruction,  
And his heart triumphs in the bloody scene.

*Dom.* No more: let her put on the sable veil,  
Her punishment no longer be delayed.

*Pin.* Pomponia aid me— *Em.* O tremendous moment!

[*Pinaria and Pomponia take from Emilia her white  
veil, and put on her a black one.*

*Pom.* (My conscience starting makes my bosom heave

With palpitations wild.) *Dom.* Licinius say,  
Where's her seducer? Where's that monster Celer?  
Did I not order thee to drag him hither  
To see the fruit of his seduction. *Lic.* Sire,  
Behold, he comes.

## S C E N E VII.

*To them Celer in chains, with guards.*

*Cel.* O spectacle of grief!

Unfeeling monster! execrable Tyrant!  
Whose lust is murder, and whose horrid joy  
To curse the world with chains, to tear mankind;  
Cerberus, not Vespasian was thy parent,  
The furies gave thee suck.

*Dom.* Lictors perform your duty, force Emilia  
Into her grave, then seize that vile blasphemer,  
That wretch, that monster, steel your hearts to pity,  
Let hell-invented tortures glut my rage.

[*Exit with Licinius and attendants.*

*Em.* We are innocent victims, but since Heav'n  
 Pronounced the tyrant-law, we must submit,  
 'Tis folly to contend. *Cel.* Thou art deceiv'd :  
 The gracious Gods abhor the ways of Tyrants ;  
 The odious law that causes our sad misery  
 Was fram'd by Numa—skill'd in the dark arts  
 Of Tyranny, to gain a boundless sway  
 He summon'd to his aid Hypocrisy,  
 Under her cloak conceal'd his lust of pow'r,  
 Call'd fancied idols Gods, created Vesta,  
 Plac'd her in Heav'n, and sunk a grave for love.

*A faithful heart Gods ne'er reprove,*  
*Nor look on lovers with disdain ;*  
*Too good to bar the joys of love,*  
*Our sweet sensations to restrain.*

*Em.* Since Heav'n approves a love sincere,  
 Since our best joys Gods ne'er controul,  
 Alas ! how long a groundless fear  
 Has prov'd the Tyrant of my soul.

*Cel.* Of sacred truth I spoke the creed.

*Em.* My mind now sees her beams divine.

*Cel.* *Em.* We're guiltless victims forc'd to bleed  
 At superstition's fatal shrine.

*Em.* My love, my life, doom'd to forego !

*Cel.* Compell'd I am thy lot to share.

*Em.* *Cel.* O wringing spectacle of wo !  
 O dreadful instant of despair !

*Pin.* Set on the brink of dread futurity,  
 With daring lips you still provoke the Gods—  
 Oh shame ! oh monstrous ! but without delay  
 Emilia now prepare to meet thy fate

*Pom.* (Ye gracious pow'rs !) *Em.* O Heav'n ! *Cel.* My  
 last farewell

Emilia take within these longing arms—  
 O could I but expire in this embrace !

[They embrace each other.]

*Em.* D' orrida Tirannia—

Siam vittime innocenti,  
Ma poichè il Ciel dettò l' iniqua legge  
E' vano il contrastaz. *Cel.* Cara t' inganni,  
I Numi mai non furono tiranni:  
Il Tiranno fu Numa,  
Che mascherando il vero  
Col velo dell' errore  
Indusse Roma a seppellir l' amore.

*Non è ver che in odio ai Numi*

*Sieno i placidi costumi,*  
*Non è ver che l' Ciel Tiranno*  
*Vieti all' alme un fido ardor.*

*Em.* Dunque i dolci affetti miei

*Non offendono gli Dei!*

*Infelice in qual inganno*

*Ebbi a gemere finor.*

*Cel.* Io ti scopro i rai del Vero.

*Em.* Tu sei luce al mio pensiero.

*2.* Siam due vittime immolate

*Sull' altare dell' error.*

*Em.* Sventurata io vado a morte.

*Cel.* Vò a incontrar l' istessa sorte.

*2.* O momento di spavento!

*O spettacolo d' orgog!*

*Pin.* Sull' orlo della vita

Troppi liberi sono i vostri accenti.

Il dovuto castigo

Più non lieti indugiar. *Pom.* (Oh Numi !)

*Em.* Oh Dio !

*Cel.* Prendi l' estremo addio—

[Si abbracciano.]

O cara almen potessi

Spirar mentr' io ti cingo il sen d' amplexi.

*Pin.* Vieni Emilia alla tomba:  
 Di profani pensieri  
 Questo tempo non è: supplice implora  
 La clemenza del Ciel, che in lieta fronte  
 Degni per tua salvezza,  
 Per conforto di noi  
 L' olocausto accettar de' giorni tuoi.

[*Em. s' inginocchia davanti la tomba.*

*Cel.* Immensi Dei cui piacque  
 Con mirabili prove  
 L' innamorata Claudia  
 Agli artiglj involar d' acerba morte,  
 Dalla barbara forte  
 Di due infelici amanti  
 Intenerir lasciatevi—l' amore,  
 La fedeltà dell' alma è 'l nostro errore.

*Pin.* Misera, il Ciel non ode i voti tuoi,  
 L' Oracolo intenderesti. *Cel.* Le sue voci  
 Sempre confuse sono ;  
 Se giungono di Giove al sommo Trono  
 Le curè de' mortali,  
 Se la pietà non è straniera a' Numi,  
 Rechino qualche luce  
 Dell' eterno voler ai sensi bui,  
 Che fan di lor favoleggiare altrui.

*Pin.* Emilia mark thy grave—this is not time  
 For thoughts profane, and to indulge thy folly:  
 Implore the boundless clemency of Heav'n,  
 Pray to the gracious pow'rs that they will deign  
 To think the forfeit of thy bloomy days  
 A full atonement for thy past offence,  
 Smile on the sacrifice, and blefs the victim.

*Em.* Immortal pow'rs, who were once pleas'd to snatch

[*Emilia kneels before her grave.*

With striking wonders a devoted Vestal,  
 Th' enamour'd Claudia, from the jaws of death,  
 Ah feel compassion for two wretched lovers,  
 Whose only error is a feeling heart,  
 Condemn'd to perish for the noblest passion.

*Pin.* The Gods are deaf to thy polluted vows,  
 The Oracle thou know'st. *Cel.* The clouded words  
 Of Oracles obscure the beams of Truth;  
 If mortal cares engage the thoughts of Jove,  
 If we must trace to Heav'n the source of mercy,  
 Let Gods explain themselves in accents clear  
 Resplendent as themselves, let them dispel  
 Those clouds that make Olympus fabulous,  
 And arm'd gigantic folly.

## SCENE THE LAST.

*The scene darkens, the thunders roll, and a cloud appears, which gradually dispersing itself, discovers the Deities with the written Oracle, which is explained by VENUS.*

*Pin.* Gracious pow'rs

What do I hear! *Pom.* Ah! what can this portend!  
Superior Beings mercy— *Cel.* Sweet Emilia,  
My hopes revive. *Pin.* What do I see! *Em.* O  
Heav'n!

Hope pours her balmy comfort in my heart.

## VENUS.

*Mercy the Oracle proclaims,*  
*Kind Heav'n no punishment requires,*  
*Great Jove shall ne'er condemn those flames*  
*Which in his goodness he inspires.*

*Cel.* O people hear—suspend your senseless rage,  
The purity of love, Emilia's passion  
Is not condemn'd in Heav'n—the Gods themselves  
Have deign'd to clear the blindness of your mind.

*Em.* O bliss! *Pom.* O wonder! *Cel.* O felicity!

*Pin.* Emilia now is safe. *Cel.* And Celer happy.

*Pin.* Guards break those fetters—

[*The Lictors unfetter Celer, and take the black veil  
from Emilia.*

*Cel.* From this blest event,  
O Romans, learn that Heav'n o'erflows with mercy,  
That love's a cordial drop the Gods have granted  
To cheer the soul, and sooth her num'rous griefs.  
Learn that the joys a virtuous passion gives  
Are the chief biss of life, and the Ambrosia.

## SCENA ULTIMA.

*Si oscura la scena, si sentono tuoni, dopo di che comparisce una nuvola, la quale dilatandosi poco a poco scopre il coro delle Deità col motto dell' oracolo scritto, il quale viene spiegato da Venere.*

*Pin.* Che sento ! oh Ciel ! *Pom.* Che farà mai !

*Em.* Pietade

*Eccelsi Numi.* *Cel.* Amica

Sperar ci giova ancor — *Pin.* Che miro ?

*Em.* Oh Dio !

Il conforto rinasce nel cor mio.

## VENERE.

*Mora ? no — che 'l Ciel non vuole,*  
*Dell' Oracolo Quiriti*  
*Voi dovete le parole*  
*In tal guisa interpretar.*

*Cel.* Sospendete il furor, popoli udite,  
 Non è vietato in Ciel l' amor sincero,  
 Egli stesso vi aguzza i lumi al Vero.

*Em.* O prodigo ! *Pom.* O portento !

*Cel.* O fortunato evento !

*Pin.* Emilia è salva. *Cel.* E Celere è felice.

*Pin.* Calmatevi Quiriti,  
 Si sciolgano que' lacci.

*[I Littori scatenano Celere, e Pomponia leva il  
 velo nero dal capo d' Emilia.*

*Cel.* Imparate o Romani.  
 Quanto fieno clementi e giusti i Numi :  
 Messaggiero di pace ai nostri mali  
 Amor dal Ciel discese — O voi mortali

L' unico vostro bene  
 Custodire sappiate,  
 Se gli affanni del cor scemar bramate;  
 Alberghi la ragion ne' vostri Tempj,  
 Nè siate per pietà spietati ed empj.

Celere ed Emilia.

*L' alma nostra in dolci nodi  
 Dal destin, dal Cielo unita,  
 Di contento e doppia vita  
 Potrà l' aure respirar.*

Coro Finale.

*Veneriam gli alti decreti  
 Dell' eterna Provvidenza  
 Che soccorso all' innocenza  
 Sempre pronta è ad arrecar.*



IL FINE.

Of mortals—be religious, love the Gods,  
But mind—exclude not reason from your Fanes;  
Nor for the sake of piety be impious.

Celer and Emilia.

*Of all the goods th' immortals give  
Existence since the chief we deem,  
Link'd in sweet union while we live  
Twofold we taste the bliss supreme.*

The last Chorus.

*Let us e'er praise the ruling pow'r,  
Plants of his tenderness we find  
His blessings like a gentle show'r  
Fall on the wants of all mankind.*

THE END.



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